

# HOW TO RAISE RESILIENT KIDS?

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## Be a resilient parent

When it comes to describing how and why children behave a certain way, the phrase "monkey see, monkey do" explains it all. Children are primed to follow the behaviours, habits and demeanours of the people around them.

That is why it is so important for parents to set the example they want for their child. Children naturally look up to their parents. Most children think the world of their mothers and fathers, and want to be just like them. This in itself makes the behaviour of parents even more crucial.

Children watch everything. They see the way you behave with the people around you, they observe your attitudes to situations, both your verbal and non-verbal expressions, and they emulate that. According to Dr. Dan Siegel, author of "The Yes Brain", which focuses on cultivating children's resilience, "A parent's resilience serves as a template for a child to see how to deal with challenges, how to understand their own emotions."

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*- Dr. Dan Siegel*

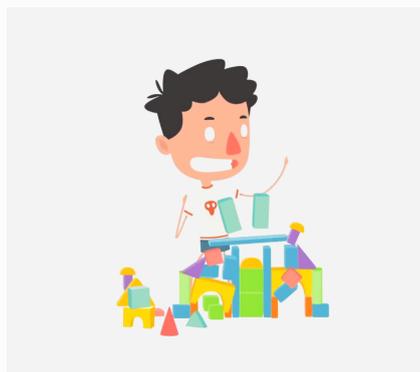
Yet when our child misbehaves, our immediate reaction is often of anger, frustration and disappointment. However, if we can understand that children act out because that is a natural part of their growth to develop and discover who they are, then we can begin to separate our own ego from their growth process - even the messy parts.

Rather than blaming them, ridiculing and isolating them when they misbehave, if we could instead absorb these challenges as a natural part of growing up, we not only portray resilience, we also subconsciously show our children how to behave when faced with frustration.

**Here are some quick tips on how to stay resilient.**

## Let emotions happen

Understand that emotions, even the negative ones such as sadness, grief, and anger are not problems to be fixed. They are merely a natural consequence of being human. "The thing about emotions is that they don't last forever; there's a beginning, middle and end to all of them." says Carla Naumburg, a clinical social worker and author of "Ready, Set, Breathe: Practicing Mindfulness With Your Children for Fewer Meltdowns and a More Peaceful Family". It is when we restrict emotions from happening that we disrupt the natural growth in that particular lesson.



## Set boundaries with compassion

More often than not, we scold our children and then isolate them by sending them off to their room to "reflect" on their mistakes. However, what this creates is further distance and sometimes even fear and misunderstanding between you and your child. Dr. Naumburg instead suggests verbally acknowledging your child's feelings and even going so far as to comfort your child, while still staying firm with your stance. So if you say 'no' to your child and he or she throws a tantrum, rather than punishing and getting angry about it, try showing compassion with a hug and some kind words, but stay firm with your 'no'. In the same way we show compassion to our friends and colleagues, we can show this same level of respect and compassion to our children.

## Take a breath

Finally, when all else fails, breathe. This is the best way to silence all those initial alarm bells going off when your child misbehaves.

According to research, parents and children often synchronise their heart rates, breathing and other physiological functions, so calming yourself down before reacting acts as a mirror for your child to follow, allowing for calmer interactions overall.

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